The Portrayal of Women in the Select Plays of Girish Karnad and Vijay Tendulkar : A Comparative Study

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Introduction:

Drama or the performing art appeals to the eyes of beholders as it has the magic of produce an image that insulates the mind and interconnects it with the body to visualize men and women or the dramatic personage in all their complexities and collective reactions upon the performing arts. This performance of characters stimulates their audiences as well as readers in the way that it co-exist cultural frame. However, a drama or a '*natak*' is not new thing for an Indians because it already introduced to countrymen and existed in the form of folk or '*Jatra*'. Indian drama is different from that of Greek plays, which Athenians had enjoyed and on which Aristotle had modeled his magnum opus *Poetics.* Indian dramas have been closely associated with some of the restricted growth; encompassed within the strings of caste, creed, religion, untouchability, orthodoxy and so on.

India has rich and glorious tradition in the field of drama. It has ancient plays in Sanskrit language and Indian tradition preserved in *Natyasastra,* the oldest text of the theory of drama, which claims drama as divine origin and a close connection with the sacred Vedas themselves. However, Sanskrit drama never offers tragedy unlike Shakespearean plays; it never offers tragic catastrophe in the mind of audience or readers. Most of the Sanskrit plays offers and appeals to poetic sensibility. As it nourishes the primary sentiment and arises emotion of pleasure or pain of the heart. These feelings comprise 'Rati' (enjoyment), 'bhaya' (fear), 'Vismaya' (surprise), 'hasa' (mirth), 'Soka' (grief), 'Krodha' (anger) and 'Utsaha' (enthusiasm). However, Sringara or erotic is the major rasa in the plays of most of the Sanskrit plays. Karuna or pathos is the chief sentiment and 'Veera' or the heroic is the rasa in most of them.

Rabindranath Tagore and Sri Aurobindo were the greatest Indian sage-poets. Tagore primarily wrote in his mother tongue, Bengali and translated them in English. They are about real portrait of the ethics and ethos of contemporary age. His important plays are *Mukta, Natir Pooja, Sanyasi and the Mother's Prayer, Chindalika, Chitra, Mukta Dhara* and *The Post Officer.* Sri Aurobindo is a major Indian dramatist. He wrote many plays, however his five plays are worth to be mention, they are: *The Viziers of Bassora and Eric, Perseus the Delivery, Vasavadutta,* and *Rodogune.* An essential characteristic feature of his plays is that his plays deal with different cultures and countries in different epoch. His plays owes to Elizabethan plays in regard with plot construction and characterization.

Nissim Ezekiel is primarily known as poet; however he has contributed in composing dramas which are portraits of society and time. Dramas of the period related to love-affairs, problems of modern society, destruction of family as an institution, individual problems, sexuality and absurdity of the contemporary age. He handled these issues with careful concern and skills. Among his important plays, *Nalini* is portrayal of the real image of a typical type of modern woman who is not the puppet in the hands of male dominance. She is a woman of his expectation who proves that she is free woman of modern era.

Like Ezekiel, Mohan Rakesh also depicted the modern age and women characters effectively. He highlights through them that how a modern woman being morally transgresses. Modern and post-modern drama is about individual problems and separation of house. In his *Halfway House*, he focuses on a destructive family whose members are responsible for its destruction. Most of the time, his plays are compared with the plays of Eugene O'Neill. Halfway House and O'Neill's *Mourning Becomes Electra* are based on morality of characters and destruction of family. In both of the plays, over sexuality is the real cause of destruction of family.

Playwrights like Nissim Ezekiel, Mohan Rakesh and Vijay Tendulkar have seen contemporary life very keenly and closely. Their men and women are real men and women of flesh and bones and real portrayals of modern era, because all of them have poured their talent and skills to create their plays. They proved how modern man and woman being self-centred in the tangled relationship and have nothing to do with responsibilities towards society. Unlike them, Girish Karnad explores themes of history and myths and is about folk-tales. He is the only dramatist who is inspired by the past.

Girish Karnad is one of the playwrights of India, among Vijay Tendulkar and Badal Circar, who was inspired by history, myths, culture and folk-tales of Indian tradition, gods and goddesses. He is multidimensional—actor, film director and Kannada playwright and practitioner of serials on television. His plays are classics in Kannada later translated into English which gave him first rank of Indo-Anglican dramatist. Because of his genius and ways of writing, Kannada sought famous with the publication of his two plays *Tughlaq* (1972) and *Hayavadana* (1975). In *Yayati, Tughlaq, Naga-Mandala, Fire and the Rain, Tale Danda, Hayavadana* and *Tipu Sultan*, he uses history, folk tale and myth as background of the action. He tries to establish modern man's relationship with history and myth. He used them metaphors for the expression of contemporary reality and issues with a new perspective.

Primarily, he writes in Kannada languages, however his most of the plays are translated in English. He is an author, actor, producer, scholar, film director and a genius man of manners. He learnt from Puranas, and applied his learning to modern characters. His has roots associated with ancient learning and are applied to modern life. He brought himself up in unorthodox environment which helped him to have open mindedness about gender and sexuality.

His *Hayavadana* is inspired from *Kathasaritsagara*, a collection of tales and Thomas Mann's *The Transposed Head* to ridicule the mechanical conception that the head is superior limbs of human body. This play deals with identity-crises and revolves around characters Kapila, Padmavati and Devdatta. Kapila is presented as a stubborn and strong minded iron-smith youth and man of strong body. Padmini is very clever woman who uses Kapila as well as Devdatta for her sexual pleasure. Sex dominates her overall personality and her selfishness is responsible for their doom. She is a typical woman who desires the large-heart and love of husband along with physical pleasure of other man as Ana of Leo Tolstoy from *Ana Karenina*. However, confusion and greed gets him for ruin of life.

Nagamandala is about patriarchy and questions the very existence of a woman in the society. Again sexuality is the main theme of the play, which create major changes in the life of his characters especially women characters. The play revolves around Rani, a newly married girl, whose husband has extra-marital affairs. Rani is shown young, innocent, naive and unsatisfied married girl, who creates her fantasy and kills her loneliness by establishing sexual relationship with *Naga*, a cobra.

Vijay Tendulkar was a Marathi dramatist, literary essayist, social commentator and screenwriter. He portrays real-life situations and incidents in his plays and offers real characters of the contemporary age. Psyche of the contemporary society remains the main theme in his most of plays. Patriarchy and male control society are the common subjects for his plays; however his women characters are responsible for shaping their own future and existence.

His well known drama on which his fame rests is *Silence! The Court is in Session* is about male dominated culture and especially about psychological violence of men of cultured society;

Sakharam Binder exhibits excessive sexual pleasure and lust of the protagonist of the same name. His *Kamala* exposes the hypocritical and selfish nature of male control society; *Kanyadan* expresses a Dalit poet's physical, verbal abuse and psychological violence which has background of caste-consciousness. *The Vultures* describes physical and verbal violence through bold characters and in *Ghashiram Kotwal* depicts the sadist tendancies of human being as well as the end of innocent daughter by father for political power.

Another noteworthy characteristic feature of his plays is optimism of his protagonists. Despite of their being victims of the circumstances, they are stubbornly positive about their existence and future. In *Sakharam Binder*, Laxmi after being left miserably by her relative and death of her husband is happy with drunkard Sakharam. He beats and abuses her verbally every day, but she is not ready to leave him at any cost. Her optimism makes her to be happy with him and ready to die in solace on the lap of an abusive Sakharam. Champa in the same play remains happy and adopts herself with Sakharam for lustful life even her husband is alive. In *Silence! The Court is in Session* Leela Benare is cheated twice by her male-counterparts, but is happy with her single life and interested among her students, as they are the inspiring agents.

In the cultural and so-called civilized society, described by Tendulkar, women, as a weaker element of the society, are exploited by their male relatives at home, especially husbands, and by highest authorities outside their homes. His women are exploited; even they are educated and emotionally strong, by the men including relatives and authorities. Tendulkar's women characters suffer from male dominated culture, lovelessness, gender discrimination, violence against them and excess belief in religious activities. In most of the plays, Tendulkar's protagonists are women, as in *Silence! The Court is in Session, Ghashiram Kotwal, Kamala, Kanyadan, The Vultures* and

Sakharam Binder. Though women are his central characters, they are exploited, suffered, suppressed, oppressed and losers.

Tendulkar's women are suffered because of their weakness or drawbacks from the hands of male controlled system. Leela Benare in Silence! The Court is in Session, Jyoti in *Kanyadan*, Sarita in *Kamala* and Laxmi in *Sakharam Binder* suffer because of their fate, weakness and dependency on male relatives. In most of his plays, Tendulkar criticizes on the institution of marriage and family system which make women suffer from the hands of males. His women are the real follower and responsible for mutual trust, purity, integrity and fidelity.

Aims and Objectives:

1. The present doctoral research aims at describing the various themes of Vijay Tendulkar's plays comprising the theme of identity, love, betrayal, marriage, relationship between men and women, exploitation, male dominance, gender discrimination, violence against women and existence of women etc.
2. To find out the various characteristic features of Tendulkar's plays such as his strong focus as a setting of his plots, creating special women characters, his male characters are simple and common like everyman but his female characters are more complex etc.
3. His dramas also consist of various factual elements such as plot, characters, setting etc. He is often compared with Girish Karnad. His plot is less important than his characters.
4. To focus Karnad's special use of myths, history, Hindu culture, divine thoughts, use of Vedas and ancient, and idealistic views.

5. To focus his depiction of orthodoxy and caste, use of folk-tale, Karnad's social awareness style, simplicity and lucidity and use of symbols.
6. His use of Hindu Dharma Shastra, sources of Dharma, Artha (money) and Karma (deed). Also focuses on how karma drives characters to their doom.
7. To investigate the complexity of human existence in entangled relationship, their pattern of behavior, the cathartic conclusion, life of countryside people, their married life, yearning for freedom, love, adultery and loss and suffering.
8. To investigate the epiphanic elements in plays of Tendulkar's plays; the inter-relationship between human and their development.
9. To expose societal vices and weaknesses through the portrayal of women characters. Tendulkar's plays focus on women as central characters; however they are exploited, make struggle for existence, but many a time are losers.

Hypothesis:

1. Plays of Karnad explore human complexities, use of myths, history, folk-tales and ideas of caste, creed and orthodoxy.
2. His use of ancient words, lucid and simplicity of language. Simple passages in domestic or sexual life occupy situations frequently treated in plays, intense clarity of phrase and image, complexity and multiplicity of plot.
3. His art of telling story and setting is different from other dramatists. Most of his characters are women taken from mythologies, history and folk-tales. His stories reveal truth and ambiguity of life: ironic and serious at the same time.

4. Tendulkar's plays focus on male hegemony or patriarchy, realism, female psyche, dependencies of women, slavery and sexual freedom. His plays are controversial and provoke bitter reactions among readers and audiences.
5. He explores both physical and psychological exploitation besides sexual suppression of women characters. Social issues like male domination of women, sexual abuse and roles of society and family as an institution are underscored.
6. Tendulkar is realistic; portrays real social issues, man-woman relationship and their entanglement, patriarchy, secondary position of women in society and gender violence.
7. There will be application of approaches like feminism, and psychological etc.

Data, Scope and Limitations:

The scope for the present research will be including the select plays of Girish Karnad and Vijay Tendulkar. All the available printed and electronic material will be selected for the study. The study material for research will be collected from primary and secondary sources. The limitation will be confined to Girish Karnad's *Hayavadana, Nagamandala and Wedding Album* and *Tendulkar's Silence! The Court is in Session, Sakharam Binder, Kamala* and *Kanyadan*. It will discuss their art of storytelling characterization. It will be supported with the help of the various techniques used by them to write their plays. These techniques and skills include their use of setting, characterization, various dramatic elements such as plot, and characteristics of their language and various themes of select plays.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY:

The methodology to be adopted for the present research is descriptive, interpretative, analytical and critical with the help of various printed and electronic, primary and secondary sources. The data will be critically analyzed and evaluated in order to present Tendulkar's and Karnad's art of women characterization.

JUSTIFICATION OF RESEARCH:

The present research work will be an attempt to analyze the techniques, skills and characterization used by Vijay Tendulkar and Girish Karnad to present themes of their plays in effective way. The research will be helpful to acquaint with the various techniques and skills used by them and how their writing is different from other playwrights.

PEDAGOGICAL IMPLICATIONS:

The present study of selected plays of Girish Karnad and Vijay Tendulkar explore the various themes of their plays with the help of techniques and skills used by them. It will be beneficial in the classroom discussion for teachers and students of English Literature and readers of Indian English Literature, especially Indian English Drama. The proposed study will focus light on various themes used by these dramatists with the help of their art of story telling and characterization. So it will be beneficial at academic and intellectual level.

Chapter Scheme (Tentative):

Chapter One: Introduction

This chapter tries to focus on the prominent women characters and art of characterization of Girish Karnad and Vijay Tendulkar. Also reflects social issues, its culture and morality in the plays. It will concentrate on the biographical background of Girish Karnad and Vijay Tendulkar and their techniques and skill of writing plays as well as dramas as a genre. Also, the introductory chapter will be about the hypothesis, methodology, plan, and review of related literature, especially Indian English Drama.

Chapter Two: A General Study of Karnad and Tendulkar's Plays

This chapter will be about the general study of Tendulkar and Karnad's dramas. It will focus some of the other aspects of his plays as religious, political, economic, cultural and historical themes in their plays.

Chapter Three: A Comparative Study of Women Portrayal in Plays of Girish Karnad and Vijay Tendulkar

This chapter is the title chapter or main chapter of the thesis. It will focus strictly on the various women characters of Vijay Tendulkar and Girish Karnad that the dramatists characterized in their plays. The chapter will be critical and analytic study of their plays as well as their main themes of social issues like morality, search for identity, and place of woman in patriarchal society, man-woman relationship, sexuality and male slavery and freedom.

Chapter Four: Critical and Thematic Analysis of Tendulkar Karnad's Plays

This chapter will concentrate on the thematic study of Tendulkar and Karnad's plays and will analyze its plays.

Chapter Five: Conclusion

This chapter will summarize the arguments of the earlier chapters and would include conclusions, suggestions and recommendations for further study.

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